



## **Joint statement from the Sex Education Forum and the PSHE Association on importance of including sex and relations education within context of statutory PSHE education**

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As the leading national bodies supporting schools' sex and relationships education (SRE) and PSHE education provision we would like to stress the importance of the Department for Education including SRE within the context of a broader PSHE education when considering options for improving this area of the curriculum.

The campaign for statutory PSHE education has gained huge momentum and support from parents, schools, business leaders, over 100 leading organisations and parliamentarians from across the political spectrum.

Recently there have been a number of campaigns calling for statutory sex and relationships education. We fully support the call for statutory sex and relationships education in all schools, but this should be in the context of statutory PSHE education. We believe that strengthening sex and relationships education alone would be a missed opportunity, and limit its potential to keep pupils healthy, informed and safe from a complex range of risks.

SRE must form a core aspect of a broader PSHE education which develops essential skills and attributes – such as self-esteem, managing risk and resisting peer pressure – which pupils can apply to a range of areas; and which addresses related factors such as alcohol and drugs, media literacy, online safety, gender equality and emotional wellbeing.

This holistic approach helps to help protect children from complex problems such as child sexual exploitation which often involve numerous contributory factors addressed by PSHE education – such as drug and alcohol abuse or emotional wellbeing – but not by SRE alone. The report of the inquiry into CSE in Oxfordshire, for example, recommended that universal drug and alcohol education should be provided to secondary school pupils to help protect children from exploitation.

We are pleased to hear recent statements from the DfE that they are considering all policy options to ensure schools deliver high-quality PSHE, including SRE, and we believe there is a historic opportunity to achieve this through statutory status for PSHE education in its entirety.